

## Children's Services

### Minutes of Meeting Early Years Consultative Group

Held on: Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Time: 14:00 -16:00

Venue: South Green Park, Mattishall

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Post Title</b>	<b>Dept/Organisation</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
Jo-anne Lamb	Senior Adviser for Early Years Learning	NCC	Y
Su Rushbrook	Early Years Finance Manager	NCC	Y
Martin Brock	Accountant – Schools, SEN & Early Years	NCC	N
John Crowley	Assistance Director Learning & Achievement	NCC	N
Lacey Douglas (Chair)	Manager	The Heathers Nursery	Y
Alison Hughes	Primary Director	Inspiration Trust	Y
Kim Walters King	Senior Lead	Martham Academy	N
Lisa Papworth	Childminder		
Cassandra Williams	Head Teacher	Lakenham Primary School	N
Louise Rosen	Head Teacher	Little Drakes	Y
Claire Hooker	Head Teacher	Emneth Nursery School	Y
Claire Henry	Owner	So Schools Out	N
Lesley Doy	Manager	Chapel Break OSC CIC	Y
Carol Vincent	Nursery Manager	Spring Thorpe Hamlet	N
Emma Marsh	Owner	Strawberry Patch	N
Victoria Furness	Owner	Forest School for Life	N
Suzie Squirrel-Hughes	Owner	Little Squirrels	N
Jayne Rayner	Manager	Alburgh & Denton Pre-school	Y
Jane Pears	Manager	St. Helens Pre-school	Y
Lynne Armitage	Committee Trustee	Ducklings Pre-school	Y
Sue Brown (minute taker)	Early Years' Service & Buildings Manager	NCC	Y

<b>Item</b>	<b>Minute</b>	<b>Action and due date</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome &amp; Apologies</b> Introductions were made round the table. Apologies were received from: - Martin Brock, John Crowley, Kim Walters King, Cassandra Williams, Victoria Furness.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes of last meeting</b> Minutes from the previous meeting held on 2.2.23, read as a true and accurate record.	

### Feedback from Childminder Consultative Group

Jo advised that nine childminders attended the recent meeting, and the following were discussed:

- TOR have now been accepted by the group.
- Support for Childminders - one of the issues raised at the previous meeting was the support for new CM. In response, the process has now changed and now when someone indicates they want to register they will be assigned an IDW who will support them pre-registration and post registration for the year.
- Discussion took place regarding support for all Childminders and whether the support had changed when CM Matters ceased trading. The outcome from the discussion was that we confirmed the support had not ceased, it has been provided by the LA since the contract ceased and was there if needed.
- DfE Leaders & Mentors – a couple of Childminders are now mentors through the scheme
- Discussed recent Budget announcement and shared the power point that was shared with this group. The childminders present expressed they were not happy with the “introduction of a streamlined childminder specific EYFS” as they felt it was already difficult to be recognised and this would just segregate them even more.
- A DfE grant is now available for new Childminders registering, an amount of £600 as an independent childminder and £1200 if part of an agency. The LA had concerns recently when an agency graded ineffective, and we had to give those Childminders who were part of the agency quite a bit of support. Therefore, the start-up grant in Norfolk, which we have had in place for a number of years, has now been increased to £600. It will allow the individual childminder to claim from Norfolk and the DfE so will receive a total of £1200, so the same amount for anyone registering as part of an Agency. This will allow any new entrants to take the route that is best for them, and not due to the amount of funding available. DfE’s grant is available for anyone registering from 15<sup>th</sup> March this year and can be claimed from September 2023
- Discussed challenges being faced and how could we attract new childminders into the sector as numbers decrease.
- Sustainability was discussed briefly as not sure until the new funding rates have been confirmed how it will affect the sector.
- The consumable charge was discussed and some raised concerns around parents understanding, as its not free funding, but funded hours. Jo advised she was trying to clarify with DfE what they class as a consumable charge.
- SENIF – it was raised that some Childminders are passing charges onto the parents.
- It was asked if childminders currently looking after

children who are not currently eligible for funded hours but will be in future if the childminders would be forced to claim funding. We are awaiting further detail from DfE

- SEN Survey and NNP were discussed
- Make minutes public on our website so all Childminders can access (would also like to do the same for this group)

Jo advised it was a very constructive meeting and it is a very proactive group and are glad to be given the opportunity to discuss with us their challenges.

An advert will be going in the next newsletter to recruit more members to the group.

#### **4 Budget Announcement Implications**

Power point shared (copy attached) which was also shared with Schools Forum and the Childminder Consultative Group (as above).

The following points were raised or discussed: -

- Jo advised that we didn't have any answers, as there had been no detail from DfE as yet. We have linked with DfE but only to ask questions, but they didn't know the answers and we were advised we would probably not hear anything for a few weeks yet.
- Conversation had taken place with DfE around wrap around childcare scheme advising they need to look at with a PVI sector, in the proposal that schools could use them to provide wrap around.
- Unsure if the increase in funding can be a stretched offer.
- It was raised that some settings have already been receiving enquiries from parents about the 2-year-old places.
- The funding would still be awarded the term after the child's 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Su advised she had asked the question around having immediate access for 9-month-olds.
- Families may move their childcare nearer to their place of work which could impact on rural settings
- Jo advised that DfE had now got a recruitment team so will wait to see how that will help with recruitment, but there may not be immediate improvement.
- It was raised that more training would be needed around

2-year-olds and babies

- It was felt a positive was that the government had recognised there was a need to support the sector
- It was thought that each sector would have different challenges, but staffing would probably be a mutual challenge.
- It will be important for schools to work closely with the nurseries feeding into their schools especially with a child with SENIF funding for them to receive the lump sum bridging fund to help them over the first couple of terms.

Jo advised it is hoped that all our queries would be answered but not sure when that will be.

## 5 **Sustainability**

Concerns were raised about the number of settings closing, especially for those settings in village halls where landlords have increased the costs and passing on the extra heating costs onto the hirers. This could have a knock-on effect of the village rural life as a hole.

Rurally it would affect the village hall's income and further impact onto the village life.

Lynne advised the Community Infrastructure Levy could help. They issue lump sums to support local infrastructure and community (check out on local websites – Borough and District Councils). There is also the Rural Prosperity Fund, which may be available.

**Action:** Lacey to investigate what is available within each district **LD** and share with the group.

## 6 **SEN Survey**

Power Point shared with the group (copy attached)

Ruth advised the first SEN survey took place last year for the first time, consulting with parents, professionals, and children. The submissions from the Early Years sector was quite low so would like to gather ideas of how we can promote to enable more responses, especially from very young children.

Discussions took place with the following comments: -

- It was felt users would probably respond better if they knew how the outcome would be affected by the responses
- It was felt professionals were fed up with filling in forms,

they are already feeling undervalued so don't want to engage

- Families might not feel their children have SEN or want to admit their child has SEN
- Timing of sending them out can make a difference. Ruth advised it was spring last year but a bit later this year and have extended the response time.
- SEND claims –could the survey come out at the same time settings have to submit claims. It was also raised a separate email would be better rather than in a newsletter.
- From a Family/Parent view, a word change may help as could be quite scary to think about SEND for their child.
- Could the voice of the child be included in the professional's communication? Ruth asked if there was anything currently being used in the setting could be used?
- It was felt the one sent last year was at the wrong time as was just after lockdown and settings were being inundated with information.

## **7 Accessibility Strategy**

To be covered at the next meeting

## **8 Nurturing Norfolk Play**

Power point shared – covering the scheme so far.

Following the scheme launch last June, would welcome any feedback from what could be done going forward.

Discussions around the table with the following points raised: -

- Ruth raised we would like to see from the settings point of view what has changed, what impact has the scheme had?
- Ruth advised one of the suggestions was a speech and language video
- Helen raised that the expectation of the specialist support that the settings can provide is too high because of time, staff, space.
- It was felt the resources were very good and they have been used but cannot remember anything about the

launch. Therefore, the feeling was it would be better to embed across all training.

- Claire advised that Emneth had taken delivery as they were unable to get to one of the launch events, but had no context so wasn't really sure what they were expected to do, other than use the resources.
- It was felt there would an appetite for more training around emphasise on aspects of play. Could they be included within the Communication Hubs?

## **9 Any Other Business**

- All agreed the minutes should be published on the website.
- Jo advised that additional members (from Independent and Academy) are to be sought to join the group.

## **10 Dates of future meetings**

**11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 – 10:00 – South Green Park, Mattishall  
(meeting was cancelled)**